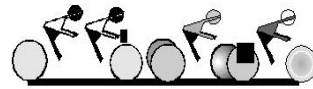




COME CYCLING



John Taylor Memorial Ride

Saturday July 9th 2011

Riders: Tom Hanley, Mike Gray, Bob Rostock, Sandy McGlashan and Ted Norfolk

We assembled in the car park at CD at the early time of 07.00 on a bright, sunny and windless morning for the second riding of John's favourite route. Sadly this year many apologies for absence so only five of us set out. Leaving CD and heading north we took the old military road to Haugh of Urr, then left at Crofthead and on over Fern Hill to Crocketford. Here we crossed the A75 and then turned left into the country lanes heading for Shawhead where we turned left following the Old Water and passing Skeoch Hill and Barnsoul, the site of this year's Kirkpatrick Macmillan Rally in September. We crossed the Cairn Water at Drumpark and pedalled on towards Dunscore, taking the usual 'by-pass' at the foot of the hill and then through the picturesque valley to Glenmidge.



bicycle.

After the short if sharp climb up to Glen Head, Sandy encountered a problem with an accumulation of grit around the front brake blocks. After some remedial work we set off again towards Kier Mill and then to the Smiddy where KM built his first bicycle about 1840. There are three different plaques and boards on the walls here with lots of information to celebrate the inventor of the first pedal driven



From here we made our way to Drumlanrig Castle for our first coffee stop at about 10.00. After refreshments we headed out of the grounds of this magnificently maintained stately home (still the main residence of the Duke of Buccleuch), heading down the main drive, crossing the river Nith and the A76, and then over to the A702 to begin our ascent of the Dalveen Pass. Last year this long hill was difficult

as we had a stiff head wind but this time the weather was perfect and a good tempo was soon being set.



Regrouping just after the summit (*polite way of saying waiting for me – Mike*) we sped down the long descent to Elvanfoot after which we crossed under the M74 and on to our destination at Crawford. Our lunch stop had been arranged at Ajay's corner shop and café provided we arrived before around 12.30, as they close at 1.00 on a Saturday. A wide variety of food and drink is available here and a good lunch was enjoyed outside in the warm sunshine.

After lunch we retraced our steps over the Dalveen Pass, this time into that westerly that seems to rise in the afternoon, even having to pedal down the upper part of the pass after cresting. We turned left at the sign for Durisdeer to take the high back road to Thornhill Station. Again we found ourselves riding

through very pretty countryside with the farmers working hard to cut and transport the hay and silage. The sunshine was very prettily dappling through the trees as we descended above Carron Bridge.



Sandy picked up his first puncture on the gravelly road at Morton Woods. This was soon remedied and we continued on the descent to the station, now a privately owned house, and past the old and new Wallace Hall school buildings to arrive at Thornhill for our afternoon coffee stop. It was Gala Day and the town was full of people enjoying the many activities in the fine weather.

After refreshments in the busy town we continued on through Keir Mill (passing the grave yard where KM is buried), took the climb back up to Glen Head with a pleasantly assisting tailwind and then dropped down Glenmidge to Dunscore. Thence on to Shawhead via Routin Bridge, where we stopped briefly to admire the waterfall. Just before we reached Crocketford Sandy collected his second puncture of the day on the rough roads. This turned out to be a 'proper job', going through the tyre sidewall. A new tube **and** tyre were fitted and we continued on into the village. Here we altered our route to CD by swinging a right at the shop onto the road towards Corsock and left at the crossroads to Kirkpatrick Durham and Old Bridge of Urr. From OBoU there is a long steep hill up to Clarebrand which was particularly difficult with almost 100 miles in our legs (*I'll say – Mike*). Finally we pedalled back to the car park in CD arriving at 18.15.



And here we are back at the King Street market car park, a little weary but triumphant, and Mike did make it back – he's behind the camera!

A very enjoyable ride in fine weather: I can well understand why John loved this route so much.

Distance: 104 miles

Text: Ted Norfolk Photos: Bob Rostock and Mike Gray